

Palmares: A Critical View on Its Sources

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Introduction

Every community has historical narratives that are known by virtually everybody. In Brazil the account of the *quilombo*¹ of Palmares is one of such stories. Palmares is already included in the history books for primary school. One of those books, *História do Brasil (Primeiro Grau)*, by Osvaldo R. de Souza, for example, mentions that during the slavery period many slaves escaped from their plantations. They established themselves in places where they were difficult to trace. In those locations, he writes, they formed *quilombos*. The most famous *quilombo* was Palmares, situated in a hilly region of the present federal state of Alagoas. The *chefe* of these runaway-slaves, he continues, was Ganga-Zumba, who after his death was succeeded by his nephew Zumbi, the *rei* (king) of Palmares. The runaway-slaves organized their own lives in their villages. They were active in agriculture and cattle-breeding and had workshops where clothes, shoes, nets, mats, and pots were made. For over sixty years these people succeeded in resisting their enemies. Eventually the *bandeirante paulista*² Domingos Jorge Velho was successful in conquering the *quilombo*, however Zumbi could escape and continued to fight for another two years. Finally he too was killed. His head was cut off and taken to Recife, where it was displayed in the market-place. Zumbi has

¹In a Portuguese article of 1987, included in the English translation in his 1992 book, Stuart Schwartz pays much attention to the use of the words *quilombo* and *mucambo* as designations for villages of runaway slaves. At present they mean more or less the same and the word *quilombo* seems to be preferred. Initially only the word *mucambo* was used in Brazil. Schwartz (1992: 125) writes that the word *quilombo* was used for the first time in 1691 and such in specific connection with Palmares. During the eighteenth century the word was generally adopted.

²For the conquering of the interior from the hostile Indians the Portuguese mainly used small private armies, called *bandeiras* after the flags they planted in the conquered land after their victory. The soldiers fighting in those small armies were called *bandeirantes*. The most famous *bandeiras* came from the capitania São Paulo. Usually they were of mixed Portuguese-Indian origin (*mamelucos*). For a comprehensive treatment of the history of these *bandeiras paulistas* I refer to Taunay, who has written down their history in eleven volumes. Volumes seven (1936) and eight (1946) cover, among other things, the role of the Paulistas in the conquest of Palmares.

become the symbol of the slaves' struggle against the white oppression (Souza 1987: 66).

Another primary school book, the one by Paulo Alcantara, also devotes a page to the Palmares Maroons. His book contains approximately the same information as De Souza's. Alcantara adds that the *confederação* Palmares consisted of approximately 20,000 inhabitants, who were living in the same way as in Africa. The name Palmares was taken from the large quantity of palm trees in the region. The Maroons cultivated maize, beans and cassava on their fields, and also Alcantara writes that the *Palmaristas* had cattle: swines and chickens. Ganga-Zumba is not mentioned by Alcantara, but Zumbi is. Alcantara remarks Zumbi's name was derived from the African Zambi, the god of war. Palmares was destroyed by the *bandeirante paulista* Domingos Jorge Velho, who fought the *Palmistas* for ten years (1687-1697) with an army of 7,000 men. Domingos Jorge Velho did not taste the pleasure of taking the blacks led by Zumbi prisoners, as many threw themselves off the rocks rather than having to return to slavery. Zumbi, who was hit by two bullets, succeeded in escaping but was killed later. His head was displayed in the centre of Olinda (Alcantara sd: 98).

A. Souto Maior's *História do Brasil* is one of the most frequently used history books in secondary school. In a chapter on slave-trade and slavery he also deals with the slave resistance, of which Palmares was a part. Souto Maior writes that a region named Palmares contained many *quilombos*, of which Macaco was famous for its fortifications. Approximately 10,000 people were living there under the leadership of Gangazuma, who received the honorary title of *Zumbi* because he was the most important leader. The title originated from Africa and stood for a divine, immortal ruler. During the Dutch period (1630-1654) there were two expeditions against the Maroons of Palmares. Souto Maior mentions the names of Rodolfo Baro (1644) and João Blaer (1645). From Blaer's diary, he writes, it becomes evident that one of the villages of Palmares consisted of 220 houses with a church and a large *casa de conselho* (meeting hall). In 1675 governor Dom Pedro de Almeida offered the Maroons peace, but this proposal was rejected in Portugal. Souto Maior also mentions a few (unsuccessful) expeditions. He finishes his story with Domingos Jorge Velho's destruction of the Maroon society in 1694. Souto Maior then quotes the cronista Rocha Pita, who wrote on the outcome of this fight that *o chefe negro Zumbi Gangazuma and his main co-fighters threw themselves off the rocks in a collective suicide as soon as they saw that all was lost*. Souto Maior continues to say that this source is not necessarily reliable, as everything took place at night, and there are also sources which report that Zumbi Gangazuma escaped, although he was injured, and continued

to fight for another two years. He was killed and decapitated for treason. His head was displayed in a public place (Souto Maior 1974: 85-88).

In virtually all New World slavery areas communities of runaway slaves were created, at present usually called Maroon societies (e.g. see Price 1973 and Heuman 1986). The majority of Maroon groups we know from history no longer exist, but in a number of countries the descendants of those people are still living in clearly recognizable communities, e.g. in Suriname and on Jamaica. The Maroons of Palmares belong to the category of historic Maroons. In Pernambuco and Alagoas, the federal states where the Maroons of Palmares used to live, it is impossible to define any groups that consider themselves descendants from the Palmaristas. In this article I want to analyse how the story about Palmares has ended up in the official Brazilian history. I will provide this analysis with marginal notes based on the fact that I am reasonably familiar with the historical sources that describe the creation of the Suriname Maroons.

There is a big difference in quantity and quality as far as the sources on the Maroons of Palmares and the Maroons of Suriname are concerned. This difference is connected with the way in which the planters waged war against their runaway slaves. In Brazil almost always *bandeiras* were used for the fight against the Maroons. These *bandeiras* were small armies of mercenaries, consisting of pacified Indians who fought at their own risk. They were not paid in money. Their earnings had to come out of the spoils of war. Goods won could be kept, conquered Maroons were sold and the army commanders shared in the proceeds. If there was a reward, it consisted of *sesmarias* to land, usually land the Maroons had lived on. When an expedition was finished, the Indians took their booty to Recife, where they reported to the governor how their trip had been. The governor then wrote to Portugal that the trip had been a great success, gave the number of people that had been killed and taken prisoner and which part of the booty was for the Crown. He usually finished his letter by mentioning that the Maroons had been heavily defeated. He did not write much more. And in the year that followed he could write approximately the same.

The Dutch in Suriname fought against the Maroons with regular troops. Indians were hardly used. (There are not many Indians in Suriname.) Slaves accompanied the expeditions as bearers. The commander was obliged to hand in a journal of his trip to the government secretariat within a few days after the expedition was finished. These journals, which often consisted of twenty folios, were very detailed. By means of such a journal the course of that expedition can be followed exactly still today. Besides giving an account of the route and the weather, the commanders also stated in their journals where they had contact with the Maroons,

where the fights took place, how the villages were positioned, they counted the number of houses, they gave a description of the weapons, wrote down the crops that were growing on the provision-grounds and how many acres were cultivated. When an expedition succeeded in taking prisoners, they were interrogated. Also those records still exist. From them it is possible to deduct how many people were living in the villages. Often the reports contain entire lists of inhabitants with a note from which plantation they originated. Those military expeditions cost a lot of money, which was collected by levying taxes on the possession of slaves.

If all documents on the Suriname Maroons were to be published, this would result in a book of a few thousand pages, whereas a publication of the sources on the Palmares Maroons would not even come to a hundred. It is not a coincidence that one of the few reports of an expedition against Palmares dates from the time when the north-east of Brazil was a Dutch colony (1630-1654). It seems to be useful to rely on Suriname sources for a view of Palmares.

Part One: Historiography

PALMARES ACCORDING TO BARLAEUS

For a long time the discourse on Palmares was held with the help of rare books (Barlaeus 1647, Rocha Pita 1730) in which data on these Maroons could be found. In the nineteenth century the interest in archival records arose with the originating of modern historical science. At that time historians started to look whether more could be told about a certain subject than the amount that could be reconstructed from books. As the few record data on Palmares were only included in standard works later than 1850, I will describe these sources only at the moment when they received their places within that historiography.

On 14 February 1630 Dutch troops landed on the beach of Pau Amarelo, a few kilometres away from Olinda, the capital of the Portuguese *capitania* Pernambuco.³ Olinda and its immediate surroundings were captured very fast. In the years that followed the Dutch expanded their territory more and more at the cost of the Portuguese. In 1636 the Dutch controlled the entire area north of Salvador de Bahia.

One year later the *West-Indische Compagnie* (West India Company) appointed the competent count Johan Maurits van Nassau as governor. He remained in the colony until 1644. On his voyage to Brazil Johan Maurits was accompanied by a number of painters (among others Frans

³In 1534 the Portuguese king João III divided Brazil into twelve areas, called *capitanias*. The thane/inheritor of such a *capitania* was called the *donatário*.

Post and Albert Eckhout) and scientists (the physician Willem Piso and the physicist Georg Marcgraf). He took the expense for those people upon himself; they were his public relations officers. Post and Eckhout painted the exotic New World, Piso went into the interior, where he studied diseases and Indian ways of healing, whereas Marcgraf collected information of over 1,400 kinds of tropical plants and animals.

Against his wishes Johan Maurits van Nassau was recalled to the Netherlands in 1644 and the angry governor had Caspar van Baerle, professor at the Atheneum Illustre in Amsterdam, write a book (in Latin) on his stay in Brazil. Van Baerle's book about Johan Maurits' period of office was printed in 1647 by Joan Blaeu in Amsterdam, and on that occasion the author latinized his name into Barlaeus. The beautiful book had engravings by S. Savry and J. van Brosterhuizen according to paintings by Post and Eckhout.

Shortly after the publication there was a fire at the printer's, so only a few copies of the book remained. A mutilated translation into German, without the engravings, was published in Cleves in 1660. No Dutch version was available until 1923, a very prestigious publication of only 160 copies, translated and edited by Samuel Honor' Naber, with supplements from the records of the West Indian Company. In 1940 Barlaeus was translated from Latin into Portuguese. Jan Nieuhof copied pieces of Van Baerle in his *Merkweerdige Brasiliaense Zee en Land Reize* (Remarkable Brazilian sea and land travels) (1682).

In 1675 the *Nova Lusitania. História da Guerra Brásilica* by Francisco de Brito Freyre was published in Lisbon, which dealt with the history of Brazil until 1638. What De Brito Freyre wrote about Palmares, he had taken from Barlaeus.⁴ Also Varnhage used Barlaeus, as a source for his *História do Brasil* (1845). In the nineteenth century copies of Barlaeus were available in Pernambuco. The physician Joaquim d'Aquino Fonseca and Fernandez Gama both possessed a copy in 1841.

About Palmares, Barlaeus narrated that a certain Bartolomeus Lints lived in 'Palmeiras' for some time. Whether the other things he wrote about Palmares originated from this Lints is not mentioned by the author. In those days, wrote Barlaeus, so it must have been about 1643, there were also discussions on disturbing the fortifications in the Palmeiras 'where a mixed lot of robbers and fugitive slaves was united in thieving

⁴Francisco de Brito Freyre was born in Coruche (Alentejo, Portugal) around 1625. After 1641 he followed a military career with the navy in Pernambuco. From 1661-1664 De Brito Freyre was governor of Pernambuco. He died in Lisbon in 1692 (Mello Neto 1975). The book deals in particular with the history of Pernambuco in the period from 1627 up to and including 1638.

and robbing'. Barlaeus continued that there was a greater and a little Palmeiras.

Greater Palmeiras was situated 30 miles from St. Amaro, at the foot of Boho mountain. The 5,000 blacks lived in scattered houses, which they built at the entrances to the forests. They had an exit to flee and to reach their hiding-places if danger threatened. Careful and suspicious, they sent out spies to look out for enemies in the neighbourhood. During the day they went hunting, and when evening fell, the home-comers did not worry about the absentees. After they had put out sentries they continued to dance until midnight and they stamped the ground with such a lot of force that it could be heard from far away. The rest of the night they slept until nine or ten o'clock.

The number of inhabitants of Little Palmares amounted to some thousands. The people lived in simple huts, made from twigs and grass. Behind the villages their provision-grounds were situated. There they grew coconuts, beans, potatoes, cassava, maize, sugar cane. The maize was planted and harvested twice a year. The Maroons got their fish from the rivers and went hunting. They did not keep any cattle.

After the harvest the inhabitants celebrated for a fortnight. 'They imitate the Portuguese religion and form of government,' writes Barlaeus: 'in the religion priests lead, in the form of government they have judges.' It is not entirely clear what exactly he meant by this cryptic description. For what concerns religion, he does not say that the inhabitants of Palmeiras were Catholic, but obviously they were familiar with priests. The inhabitants of Palmeiras themselves also knew slavery: someone who was robbed from a plantation, was the slave of his robber. Such a person could become free himself again by robbing another slave. Everybody who fled to Palmares by himself, was a free person there (Baerle 1923: 315-316).

A patrol which had been postponed earlier, was sent to (Greater) Palmeiras in January 1644. 'The bold and daring Roelof Baro has destroyed Greater Palmeiras completely together with his troops and a hundred Tapoei people... The robbers defended themselves behind a double fence which contained a thousand families besides the dwellings of the singles' (Baerle 1923: 369). A hundred Palmeiristas were killed in this action, while 31 were taken prisoner, seven of whom were Brazilians (= Indians) and some were under-aged mulattos. The villages were surrounded by sugarcane fields. There were a lot of chickens, but no other animals (Baerle 1923: 370).⁵ Four of the Tapoei people who travelled together

⁵Baro's journal has not survived, only his communication to Johan Maurits (The Hague, Algemeen Rijksarchief, Archief van Oude West-Indische Com-

with Baro to Palmeiras were later allowed to go to the Netherlands with Johan Maurits van Nassau (Baerle 1923: 370).

PALMARES ACCORDING TO DE ROCHA PITA

Souto Maior quoted in his history book for secondary school the eighteenth century author Sebastião de Rocha Pita. De Rocha Pita was born in Salvador de Bahia on 3 May 1660. He died in Portugal on 2 November 1738. In 1730 he published in Lisbon a *História da America Portuguesa*. In this *historia* Rocha Pita devotes eleven pages to Palmares (pages 323-333 of the re-publication of 1878). De Rocha Pita referred to Barlaeus and copied heavily from him.

The author places the origin of Palmares at the invasion of the Dutch in Pernambuco in 1630. Many slaves took advantage of the invasion and the chaos that ensued and fled. Initially it was especially men who went into the jungle. As they could not live without women, they decided to rob them from the plantations. De Rocha Pita uses the allegory of the abduction of the Sabine Virgins (1878: 325). The regime of the Palmares chieftains was a tight one. Murder and robbery were punished by the death penalty. The inhabitants of Palmares were Christians -he writes- but they did not know the correct doctrine, actually they only used the cross, and mixed Catholicism with all kinds of habits and images from Africa. As no Catholic priests were living in their midst, they were unable to receive the sacraments (1878: 326). Due to a lack of textile the people went virtually naked. Although the inhabitants of Palmares caused the colony a lot of trouble because of their marauding expeditions, there were also many inhabitants who cooperated with them if it was to their advantage.

About the Palmares form of government De Rocha Pita reports that the blacks of Palmares selected their 'chefe' from people who had a lot of experience. The inhabitants of the villages revered their chieftain with religious obedience. They gave him the title of *Zumbi*, a title which meant diabo (devil) in the language of Angola. There were also other magistrates in Palmares for the administration of justice and the waging of wars.

The most important part of the story by De Rocha Pita is conquering the fort of Zombi. His place of residence was fenced by a double row of high posts. The little town, which had approximately 20,000 inhabitants, had three gates with platforms, each guarded by a garrison led by a capitão. De Rocha Pita elaborates in a comprehensive fashion on the

pagniën (records code 1.05.01.01), *Daily Minutes* of 2 February 1644; Letter XIX of 5 April 1644).

heroic deeds of Domingos Jorge Velho at the seizure of the village. During that seizure 800 inhabitants were killed or taken prisoner. From De Rocha Pita also originates the story that king Zombi threw himself off the rocks in order to avoid being captured (1878: 329-333).⁶

In 1810, 1817 and 1819 the Englishman Robert Southey published a three-volume standard work on the history of Brazil. Southey (1774-1843), poet and historian, was the friend of other authors on Brazil (Thomas Lindley, John Mawe, James Henderson, John Luccock, Henry Koster). He had a library consisting of 14,000 books, among which many on Portugal, Spain and Brazil could be found. His *History of Brasil* was written between 1806 and 1819. In 1862 the first translation in Portuguese was published. On the whole Southey copied the Palmares episodes from De Rocha Pita (1730). For instance, his book also contains Barlaeus' story that in Palmares maize was harvested twice a year, and that the inhabitants preferred to dance until midnight (Southey 1977: I, 361). Also reports on their religion and form of government were derived from De Rocha Pita. The same can be said for the story about the seizure of Zumbi's village in 1694 and his heroic death.

The Pernambucoan historian José Bernardo Fernandes Gama extensively described the *Quilombo dos Palmares* in the fourth part of his *Memórias Históricas da Província de Pernambuco* (1844: 28-43). Also Fernandes Gama took his material from de Rocha Pita. He also let Palmares originate at the invasion by the Dutch in 1630. The first few years the slaves who had fled led a rather peaceful existence. They collected fruit from the jungle, hunted wild animals and cultivated cassava, beans, rice and maize. Within a few years the Palmares population had grown up to some 20,000 inhabitants. Just like De Rocha Pita, Fernandes Gama reports the abduction of female slaves and the syncretistic faith of the Maroons. Fernandes Gama also quotes De Rocha Pita about their form of government: the Maroons had a chosen monarchy, whereby the king had the title of 'Zomby'. In Maroon society robbery, theft and adultery were punished with the death penalty. The Palmares laws did not exist in a written form, but were handed down from father to son.

Just like De Rocha Pita, also Fernandes Gama gives a comprehensive description of Domingos Jorge Velho's fight against the Maroons. In the paragraphs that deal with the subject, new material is also used. Gama had found some documents which provided an insight in the rewards that had been promised to Domingos Jorge Velho if he were able to destroy Palmares. The story about the seizure of Palmares again originates in its

⁶Later it would become known from other sources that when Zumbi's village, Macaco, was captured, many could flee in the night, but that in that flight full of confusion many lost their step and fell to death down the precipice.

entirety from De Rocha Pita, but in some places it is exaggerated. For instance, Zumbi's suicide inspires the author to add: 'o mais brilhante exemplo de heroísmo'.

PALMARES ACCORDING TO THE *RELAÇÃO*

In 1859 the magazine *Revista Trimensal* of the Instituto Histórico Geográfico e Etnológico do Brasil published an anonymous manuscript (probably written by an inhabitant of Serinhâm) based on a record found in the Torre de Tombo archives in Lisbon by Menezes de Drummond. The document *Relação das guerras feitas aos Palmares de Pernambuco no tempo do Governador D. Pedro de Almeida de 1675 a 1678* deals with the fight against Palmares in the period 1675-1678, as the title already indicates. It is an important chronicle in which lots of names of persons and places are given. In 1988 it was reprinted in Leonardo Dantas Silva (Org.), *Alguns Documentos para a História da Escravidão*. In my references I will make use of the 1988 edition.

In February 1674 Dom Pedro de Almeida became the new governor of Pernambuco. After his arrival the fight against the Maroons grew more fierce. If the Maroons would accept the authority of the Portuguese, would behave themselves as faithful vassals of the king and his governor, would be content with peripheral grounds and would behave with humility, just like the christened Indians and poor whites, then there would hardly be any objection to their individual existence. However, as a political, social and military unit Palmares had to be destroyed.⁷

The problem was that De Almeida did not have any soldiers. The troops of the governor of Pernambuco consisted in that period of some 400 soldiers, too few to conquer Palmares (Carneiro 1947: 117). Therefore support for the *conquista* had to be sought from the *bandeiras*. There was also hardly any money in Pernambuco. Due to the wars against the Dutch the *capitania* had become flat broke.

The following can be reconstructed from the *Relação*. First of all it describes the results of an expedition led by Manoel Lopes (Galvão) in November 1675. After 25 days the patrol discovered a large *cidade* consisting of more than 2,000 houses, completely walled by palings. After a fight of two and a half hours the soldiers conquered the village and took some 70 inhabitants prisoner. The next day new fights erupted when the Palmaristas tried to recapture the village. Their attack was fended off.

⁷Thomas Flory (1979: 116-130) arrived at a similar conclusion. He has suggested that a desire for the lands cleared and developed by mocambo fugitives was also a major impulse for colonial society's attack upon them.

The refugees found a new place of residence at some 25 *léguas*⁸ from the destroyed village. Manoel Lopes also drove them away from that place, during which fight the 'army leader, named Zambi, which means God of war'⁹ was injured by a bullet in his leg (*Relação* 1988: 33).

In order to complete the *Palmares conquista*, Dom Pedro de Almeida tried to get into contact with the *bandeirante* Fernão Carrilho. On 21 September 1677 Carrilho left with only 185 soldiers, whites, *mestizos* and Indians. He told his soldiers that they were small in numbers, but that if their expedition was to be successful, they would receive land to cultivate and slaves to serve them. After two weeks the patrol came across the reinforced *mucambo* of A Qualtune, place of residence of the 'Mother of the King' (*Relação* 1988: 36). The sneak attack on their village took the inhabitants completely by surprise. Many were killed and nine or ten Maroons were taken prisoner. However, most of them were successful in escaping, like A Qualtune. From the prisoners Fernão Carrilho learned that king Gangazumba and his brother Gana Jona¹⁰ and most of the other *potentados* stayed in the *Cerca Real*¹¹ Subupira. When Carrilho arrived there a bit later he found Subupira totally burned out. The inhabitants had left without leaving anything of value (*Relação* 1988: 37). Some time later a patrol discovered a road which led to a large *mucambo*. A large number of Maroons were killed in a bloody fight, including a captain, Caspar, and João Papuya Ambrósio.¹² In addition 56 prisoners were taken, the most important one of which was *capitão* Ganga Muissa, the leader of the *gente de Angola* (the people from Angola) (*Relação* 1988: 38). This last mention makes transparent that some sort of classification existed within the group based on ethnic background. Other troops conquered the *mucambo* of Amaro, a small town of 1,000 houses. In this village two children and approximately twenty cousins and nephews of Gangazumba were taken prisoner. Tocolo, a son of the king, turned out to have been killed during the attack. In January 1678 Carrilho returned with a lot of prisoners, like a real victor.

⁸One *légua* is circa 4,800 metres.

⁹'General das Armas, que se chamava o Zambi, que quer dizer Deus da Guerra.'

¹⁰'Gana Jona' might be a typing error, as the brother is usually called 'Gana Zona'. According to Nina Rodrigues (1932: 92) this is not a proper name, but a title. *Gana* or *Ganga* are corruptions of the African *ngana*, which means Lord. According to the same writer 'Zona' is a corruption of the Lunda word *mona*, which means brother. 'Gana Zona' would then mean Lord Brother, brother of the king.

¹¹*Cerca Real* (royal fence). A walled village was called *cerca* in Brazil.

¹²The addition Papuya makes clear that Indians were living with the Palmistas.

In the opinion of D. Pedro de Almeida the Palmistas had been beaten. The governor therefore offered them peace. Two of the prisoners were sent to Gangazumba. A little while later a delegation from Palmares arrived in Recife. Their arrival caused an enormous uproar in the town. The Maroons carried their bow and arrows and some of them had guns. 'Virtually naked, their genitals covered with cloths and skins, they went into the town, headed by Gangazumba's eldest son, who was seated on a horse and who had been injured in the war' (*Relação* 1988: 42).

The Palmistas were received by the governor in public audience. Sitting at his feet with dignity, they beat themselves with palm branches until they were bleeding, as a sign of submission. They applied for peace with the whites and freedom for all who were born in Palmares, and they promised that all slaves who would flee to them would be handed over. A compromise was reached. The Palmistas would leave the region of Palmares and establish themselves as faithful subjects of the Portuguese throne in a region to be allotted to them. 'That way a fight which had lasted for years came to an end, thanks to statesmanship of Dom Pedro de Almeida, a governor who cannot be praised enough' (*Relação* 1988: 42-44).

On the basis of entries in the *Relação* the following list of *mucambos* in Palmares can be compiled:

1. Zumbi's *mucambo*, at sixteen *léguas* north-west of Porto Calvo.
2. The village of Acotirene, five *léguas* more to the north.
3. The villages of Tabocas, situated not far to the east of the villages of Zumbi and Acotirene.
4. The *mucambo* Dambrabanga, situated fourteen *léguas* north-west of the villages of Tabocas.
5. The walled *quilombo* of Subupira was another eight *léguas* more to the north.
6. Macaco, the *cerca real*, was situated six *léguas* north of Subupira. Considering Macaco's position in the Serra da Barriga Macaco it must be the newly rebuilt Greater Palmares of Barlaeus. Macaco was located on the land of the present *município* União dos Palmares in Alagoas.
7. The *mucambo* of Osenga, situated at five *léguas* north-west of Serinhám.
8. The walled village of Amaro, situated at nine *léguas* north-west of Serinhám.

9. The village called Andalaquituche, the *mucambo* of Kafuxe, Zumbi's brother.¹³
10. The village of Ma Aqualtune, the mother of the king, situated at 30 *léguas* from Porto Calvo.

ADDITIONS FROM ARCHIVAL RECORDS

After 1860 it was possible to reconstruct the following about the Maroons. Already at the time of the Dutch (Van Baerle) there were some 6,000 runaway slaves in the hilly region behind the sugar plantations of Pernambuco. Later those settlements grew to about 20,000 inhabitants. At the time of governor De Almeida those Maroons were beaten (*Relação*), however not definitely, because in 1695 (Fernandes Gama) they were attacked once more. In that fight the *bandeirante paulista* Domingos Jorge Velho played a large role. On that occasion the leader of the Maroons, who bore the title of Zumbi, threw himself off the rocks together with his main co-warriors (De Rocha Pita).

A record published in 1875 by Dias J.F. Cabral in the *Revista do Instituto Arqueológico e Geográfico Alagoano*, titled *Narração de Alguns Sucessos Relativos à Guerra dos Palmares, de 1668 a 1680*, the origin of which is quite obscure, adds mainly details to the *Relação*. As the *Narração* deals with virtually the same period as the *Relação*, the picture of Palmares is not really adjusted.

In the standard work *O Brasil e as Colônias Portuguezas* by Joaquim Pedro de Oliveira Martins, published in 1876, Palmares is mentioned. Martins refers thereby to Barlaeus, Rocha Pita and the *Relação*.

In 1884 Pedro Paulino da Fonseca published two articles on Palmares.¹⁴ The first article is not more than an elaboration of the *Relação* and did not add much to the knowledge about Palmares. The second article was more important. Although mainly the reproduction of a record, without much explanation, it still makes clear that the Palmares Maroons had not been finally beaten in De Almeida's time. The article shows (something which had already been known from Fernandes Gama 1844) that some fifteen years later, in 1693, negotiations about the fight against Palmares

¹³Brandão (1935: 67) is of the opinion that Andalaquituche is a corruption of Zala-Quituche (or Zala-Cafuche). Zala comes from Kibunda and means in that language: place of residence. Zala-Kituxe or Zala-Kafuxe therefore means the village of Kituxe or Kafuxe. The mountain range in this region is still called: Serra do Cafuchi.

¹⁴Both articles were reprinted in Dantas Silva 1988.

with another *bandeirante*, Domingos Jorge Velho, were held and that the final destruction of Palmares took place in 1694.¹⁵

A very important chronicler of Pernambuco was the Nineteenth-century archivist F.A. Pereira de Costa, born in Recife in 1851. From a compilation of records and parts of books he created a chronicle of Pernambuco, the *Anais Pernambucos*, which consisted of almost six thousand pages. It was published between 1951 and 1956.¹⁶ Almost every of the ten volumes contains information on Palmares, but the author does not make it easy for the reader. Indications as regards the sources of the stories are rare and information is frequently repeated. As collecting took place at random and in an uncritical fashion, the *Anais Pernambucanos* often contradicts itself. In 1882 Costa published a 'who-was-who' of Pernambuco. This also contains paragraphs devoted to famous warriors against Palmares, such as Domingos Jorge Velho.

Pereira de Costa belonged to a group of scientists who united themselves in the *Instituto Arqueológico, Histórico e Geográfico Pernambucano*. This group sent researchers to the Netherlands in order to search for information on Pernambuco concerning the period when the north-east of Brazil was Dutch, in the records of the West Indian Company. A very important part of those records was copied.¹⁷ A number of those reports were translated and published.¹⁸

As far as Palmares is concerned, a record was found about an expedition by captain Johan Blaer against Palmares in 1645.¹⁹ This piece was

¹⁵It should be made quite clear that even in 1694, Palmares did not end. The year can be regarded as the finish of Palmares as 'state within a state', as Maroons lived in the region even after 1694.

¹⁶Pereira de Costa probably gave this manuscript, on which he worked for almost fifty years, to many people for perusal. Parts of it were published as articles in the *Revista do Instituto Arqueológico, Histórico e Geográfico Pernambucano*. Pereira de Costa died in 1924. In 1937 his manuscript was handed over by his son Carlos to Olympio Costa Júnior (1901-1987), head of the *Bibliotheca Pública do Estado*. The *Anais Pernambucanos* consist of ten volumes. The publication was edited by Jordão Emerenciano. A reprint appeared between 1983 and 1987. On that occasion an eleventh volume was added, a comprehensive index.

¹⁷In 1886 Dr. José Hygino Duarte Pereira travelled to the Netherlands for a transcript of the main documents from the 'Brazil' records of the West Indian Company. The transcripts were later kept in the Archaeological Institute of Recife (Wätjen 1921: 3).

¹⁸E.g. in 1887: 'Breve discurso sobre o estado das quatro Capitanias conquistadas de Pernambuco, Itamaracá, Paraíba e Rio Grande.' *Revista do Instituto Arqueológico, Histórico e Geográfico Pernambucano* 34: 139-196; and in 1901 'Descrição das capitanias de Pernambuco, Itamaracá, Paraíba e Rio Grande.' *Revista do Instituto Arqueológico, Histórico e Geográfico Pernambucano* 55: 215-227 (Adriaen Verdonck).

¹⁹The original can now be found in the Algemeen Rijksarchief in The Hague, Archief van Oude West-Indische Compagniën (records code 1.05.01.01), Inven-

translated by Alfredo de Carvalho and published in 1902. A considerably better translation appeared in 1988. It was made by J.A. Gonsalves de Mello Neto, who is nowadays in Brazil the greatest expert on the *dominio holandês*.

Roelof Baro's expedition mentioned by Barlaeus had not weakened Palmeiras' power one little bit. Therefore governor Hendrik Hous, the successor of Johan Maurits, decided in favour of a new bush patrol against Palmares in 1645, this time under the command of Johan Blaer. The patrol went into the jungle on 26 February. After a few days Blaer became ill, after which he had to be taken back to Alagoas.²⁰ The others continued their trip led by Jürgens Reijmbach. On 18 March they came across an 'old' Palmares, left behind by the inhabitants three years earlier, because living there was unhealthy.²¹

The next day they continued their search for the 'other' Palmares, which had been destroyed one year earlier by Roelof Baro and his Tapuya Indians. It was found towards the evening of the twentieth. The next morning it was stormed. Two of the trumpeters, who were probably leading the way, fell into a pitfall with sharp points. The village was easy to seize as the Maroons were absent, they had been working on their provision-grounds for six days already. A few people were taken prisoner, some others were beaten to death during the pursuit. The village consisted of 220 houses, a church and a meeting hall. It does not become obvious from the description that the entire village was encircled by palings, there were, however, reinforced entrance gates. The village, which was half a mile long, had broad, straight paths which were one fathom (1,83) wide. The Maroons had all kinds of craftsmen in their midst. Their king administered justice severely and did not tolerate any *toovenaers* (witches) near him. Whenever inhabitants tried to run away, they were beaten to death if captured.

Towards the end of the journal the usefulness of palm trees to the inhabitants of Palmares is elaborated on. First of all palm leaves were used to make the roofs of the houses, they also made their hammocks out of them. The palm heart was eaten, the juice from the nuts was drunk while from the fruit also palm oil was made. The tree also supplied salt. From cut trees worms were taken which were then eaten.

tory number 60, with the *Letters Received from Brazil* of 2 April 1645: 'Journale van de Voyagie die Capt. Johan blaer gedaen heeft naer de Palmares', Ao 1645.

²⁰In the same year 1645 a Brazilian army led by André Vidal de Negreiros took Blaer captive near Recife. Some time later they killed him, together with Indians who were living with him (Carneiro 1947: 79-80).

²¹Brandão (1935: 64) positions the 'old' Palmares in the neighbourhood of Viçosa (in Alagoas) near the *engenhos* Bananal, Floreste and Matta Limpa.

Here it will be interesting to have a look into the archives that describe the Surinamese Maroons. Also in Suriname the roofs of the Maroons houses were covered with leaves from the pina-palm (*Euterpe Oleracea* Mart.) or the tas-palm (*Thrynax Perviflora*). The Maroons used to sleep in hammocks woven of fibres drawn from the Mauritius-palm (*Mauretia Flexuosa* L.). Many palms have a core which resembles a large belt of rough and fairly strong yarn. If, in the case of the Mauritius-palm, this belt is immediately cooked, it will maintain its bright white colour. It can be made flexible by firstly crushing it. In 1758, linen made from the Mauritius-palm was found in the village of Maroon chief Kormantin Kodjo. In the Suriname forests, the Maroons would mainly look for *kumbu*, a palm fruit, and *kabbes*, the palm heart. *Kabbes* is mostly understood to be the core of the maripa-palm (*Attalea Maripa* Palmae). When cutting off the top of the tree about half a meter under the place where the leaves start to bud and taking away the outer bark, one will find the leaves which have not yet sprouted and are folded together like a fan.

In Suriname the Maroons ate also palm worms called *grugru*. These cabbage worms had the size of a man's thumb. They were fried and eaten with butter or grilled on a fire like a kebab (Stedman 1988: 338). *Grugru* were also used for the production of butter. They contained so much fat that, once they were fried, they produced the so-called palm-butter. The fat was salted and stored in bottles. These palm-worms were more or less bred by the Maroons. They cut down Mauritius-palms for this purpose, in which they carved notches through to the core (Van Coll 1903: 536). Palm weevils would lay eggs in this core, which produced edible larvae after some six weeks.

The maripa-palm (*Attalea Maripa* Palmae) was probably the salt-supplier. The Suriname archives repeatedly make mention of the Maroons obtaining salt from burning tree-trunks, which they did as follows: a large amount of dry and firm firewood was collected and piled up. Palm-trees were cut in pieces and put on top of it; the amount commensurate with the desired amount of salt. A fire was made and maintained until all palm branches had turned into ashes. These ashes were left to cool down for two days and then gathered in baskets. After that, pure water was washed through the ashes two or three times. This water was then carefully collected, boiled and eventually evaporated and what was left, was salt (Hoogbergen 1990: 19- 20).

On the basis of the route description in the journal Brandão concluded that the village destroyed by Reijmbach and his men must have been situated in Alagoas, between the present day places Viçosa and União dos Palmaros (Brandão 1935: 62-4). In 1675 the village of Zumbi, the *cerca real do Macaco*, was supposed to have been situated in the same

place. After the departure of the attackers the *quilombo* had therefore been rebuilt.

Information on Palmares can also be found in the manuscript by the Benedict monk Dom Domingos de Loreto Couto, published in 1904 but dating from 1757. Couto was born in Recife at the end of the seventeenth century. In 1762 he was probably 66 years old, a monk belonging to the *Ordem de São Bento* and living in Recife (Mello Neto 1986: 196). Couto's sources are books of the seventeenth and eighteenth century, besides manuscripts and documents from the Recife archives. Couto also declares that he received information from old people.²² In Loreto Couto's work *Gana-Zona* is also mentioned as a brother of Ganga-Zumba. From his book it is possible to infer that the agreement between the governor and the representatives of Ganga-Zumba was not accepted by the majority of the Palmares commanders. Loreto Couto mentions that *Gana-Zona* helped the Portuguese in the war against the Maroons of Palmares.²³ So it becomes clear that part of the Maroons made peace around 1678 and abided by it, whereas another part kept on fighting.

Around the turn of the century the group of scientists in Recife also included Nina Rodrigues, who worked at the University of Pernambuco. He had probably frequent contact with Pereira da Costa. On the basis of everything that had been written on Palmares Nina Rodrigues published in 1904 a general article on Palmares, which bore the interesting title *A Tróia negra. Erros e Lacunas da História de Palmares*.²⁴ After briefly describing the sources until that moment, he starts a discussion with De Rocha Pita, who wrote about Palmares that it was *uma república rústica, bem ordenada*, with a chosen leader: Zâmbi (spelling by Rodrigues). Rodrigues notes that one should not think of our republics in that respect, but of the African habit to choose the person who was best suited as 'jefe' (Rodrigues 1988: 19). Also the statements by De Rocha Pita about the size of the villages, the type of building and fortifications are qualified by Rodrigues. In his opinion it concerned simple villages, which just like in Africa were dotting the landscape.

On the basis of various large general accounts on Brazilian history which were published in the second part of last century and the 1884 article by Fonseca, Nina Rodrigues reconstructed the period 1678-1697. He made it clear that various expeditions were sent to Palmares later

²²'Esta História estribado em verídicas informações de pessoas de 80, 90 e 100 anos' (note 31 Desagravos I, p.7).

²³Gana-Zona was made a free man in 1678 and on that occasion he received the name of Don Pedro de Sousa Castro Ganazona. He died in 1681 (Costa 1951: V, 229).

²⁴The expression 'Troia Negra' Rodrigues took from Oliveira Martins (1876: 64).

than 1678. In 1678 the Maroons had not been beaten yet. Their struggle lasted at least until 1694, when Zumbi's village, Macaco, was conquered.

Records published at the beginning of this century, further colour the story about Palmares with all kinds of details. The main information came from records of the baron of Studart (published in 1906, 1910-1913 and 1921) and from the correspondence of Diogo Botelho, governor of Brazil from 1602-1608, which was published in 1911. These last documents made it clear that the Palmares settlements dated back a long time before the Dutch arrived. Indeed, in a letter of 20 February 1601 Diogo Botelho refers to Palmares. He then wrote that he was planning to deal with 'os negros dos Palmares'. A year later the governor sent a patrol to the Maroons under the command of Bartolomau Bezerra. From Botelho's correspondence it becomes transparent that more expeditions were sent to the Maroons of Palmares during his governorship, but no data can be found on the outcome (*Corespondência de Diogo Botelho* 1911: 192 and 218).

A very important book on Palmares, mainly based on the above-mentioned literature, but with interesting new sources, found in the records of Alagoas was published by Alfredo Brandão in 1914. According to his writings Macaco, Zumbi's village, existed as a village until 1831, after which it was named Vila Nova da Imperatriz and subsequently, with a wink at history, União dos Palmares in the present federal state of Alagoas.

In 1918 a small article about Palmares was published in English in the *Journal of Negro History* (Chapman 1918: 29-32). Chapman mainly limits himself to a representation of the historically known facts. The latter cannot be said of the article by Manuel Arao, published in 1922. For a large part nothing new is happening and Arao keeps to the description by Blaer, Rocha Pita and the *Relação*. When we look at the data that concern Palmares, it seems that around 1920 a lot was known about people who fought against the Maroons, but that there was very little anthropological knowledge on the group itself. Unfortunately this does not stop many speculating about the Maroon culture, by interpreting those sources very carelessly. Manuel Arao has Blaer say things which he did not describe, he quotes wrongly from Barlaeus and uncritically takes over all kinds of reports by De Rocha Pita. Araújo was not the first one of a series of speculative scientists. De Rocha Pita had preceded him two centuries earlier. Nor would he be the last one.

In the course of the 20th century Palmares became more than a historic event. The fact that slaves did not remain helplessly on the plantations, but instead fled and built up alternative communities in the jungle is a politically and ideologically important and useful observation. Life in Palmares can be credited with all kinds of properties that first of all are

important for the political struggle in the present. Palmares can be called a republic, a black republic, a socialist republic, a democratic republic, anything according to the writer's interpretation.

On the basis of records from 1696 Dr. Mario Behring proved in 1930 that the statement by De Rocha Pita that Zumbi had thrown himself off the rocks when his village, Macaco, was seized, could not be true, as Zumbi had lived for approximately two more years afterwards. On 13 March 1696 the governor of Pernambuco wrote to Lisbon that Zumbi had been killed. A mulatto who had been taken prisoner by the inhabitants of São Francisco, knew his abode and, in exchange for his life, he had taken the paulistas to the mucambo of Zumbi. There were only about twenty Maroons in this village and they formed no match for the attackers. Zumbi was killed and decapitated afterwards (Behring 1930: 150).²⁵

OVERALL STUDIES

In 1938 a comprehensive study on Palmares was published by Ernesto Ennes, record keeper of the Arquivo Histórico Colonial in Lisbon. In this work Ennes published 95 documents which he had found in his records on Palmares. An extensive introduction of 130 pages combined the old data with the new sources. After Ennes' book not many new information has emerged. The books and articles on Palmares which were published afterwards are all adaptations of the material known around 1940. The most well-known of those works are Carneiro (1947), de Freitas (1954), Moura (1959), Kent (1965), Freitas (1973), Schwartz (1987) and Alves Filho (1988).

When we look back at what became available as new information in connection with Palmares during the period 1900-1940, it appears that first of all it was established that Palmares already existed during the pre-Dutch period. Second, all kinds of record data became available which made it clear that also in the period starting in 1654 (when the Dutch left) and finishing in 1675 (the expeditions under governor De Almeida) patrols were sent regularly to Palmares. It also emerged that the fight against Palmares had continued after 1678. The death of Zumbi reported by De Rocha Pita should not be dated in 1678 but eighteen years later.

After Macaco was captured in 1694 Indian villages were established in the Palmares region. In 1698 António Vieira de Melo, son of Bernardo Vieira, commander of the troops that conquered Macaco in 1694, started

²⁵In September 1906 Behring also published Zumbi's death in the *Kosmo* magazine. I have not been able to recover the article in question. It may be that it contained the same material as the article of 1930.

to colonize the Palmares region. He established a fazenda in Jupi, built houses for his workers and a chapel dedicated to Nossa Senhora do Rosário. Several times the fazenda was attacked by Maroons, but they were beaten back after which they left Jupi in peace.

In October 1700 the Maroons seemed to have recovered themselves to such an extent that the governor received permission from the king to hold a new expedition in order 'to completely destroy Palmares'.²⁶ The Maroons were known to be led by Camuanga, a brother of Zumbi (Costa 1951: IV, 487 and 509). The expedition destroyed various *mucambos*, took 100 Maroons prisoner, including the eldest son of Camuanga. This was the last expedition against Palmares. In view of the relatively little number of people that were killed and taken prisoner in the preceding years, it can be assumed that the survivors had mixed with the free coloured population living in the region. In the nineteenth century descendants were still living in the village of Reino Encantado (Perreira de Costa 1951).

Part Two: Discussion

DEMOGRAPHY

How many inhabitants did Palmares have? Van Baerle estimated their number at 6,000 (5,000 in Greater and 1,000 in Little Palmares). Blaer's journal estimates the same numbers. The *Relação* mentions many villages, but tells us little about the number of their inhabitants. A number of some 10,000 inhabitants for all those villages seems an estimate which is sooner too high than too low. De Rocha Pita and Brito Freyre give a number of 30,000, a figure taken by most authors. According to Schwartz (1992: 123) there were only about 200 *engenhos* in Pernambuco in the 17th century, each having approximately 100 slaves. According to him there were only about 20,000 slaves, so a number of 30,000 runaway slaves seems an exaggerated estimate.

I think that more slaves were living in Pernambuco, but one and the other does not influence the proposition that 30,000 runaway slaves is highly exaggerated. Let us count. Father Fernão Cardim who was in Pernambuco in 1584, wrote that there were 66 *engenhos* in this *capitania* in that year, on which an average of 50 slaves were working (Cardim 1939: 290). This means that there was a total of some 3,300 slaves in Pernambuco. Gabriel Soares de Souza (1938: 29) gives for the same year a number of four to five thousand black slaves, whereas a Jesuit father

²⁶Arquivo Histórico Ultramarino, Pernambuco, Códice 257, f 53 v. (Acioli 1988: 25).

mentions a number of ten thousand black and two thousand red slaves (Calmon 1959: II,347) one year later. Further data are not available.

In the period between 1600 and 1630 an annual average of 4,000 slaves was supplied (Ennes 1938: 17). At an estimate annual decrease of 6% this supply meant a growth up to more than 50,000 slaves in 1630. As a result of the Portuguese-Dutch war no slaves were imported between 1630 and 1635, which meant that the slave population dropped from about 55,000 in 1630 to 40,000 in 1635. In the period 1635-45 the Dutch took 23,163 slaves to Brazil (Wätjen 1913: 431), so that in 1645 the slave population can be estimated at approximately 40,000.

As a consequence of the revolt of the Portuguese planters and the new hostilities again no slaves were imported between 1646 and 1654. We do not know anything about slave imports after 1654. It will not have been a lot, as the literature generally mentions that Pernambuco never recovered from the wars against the Dutch. The region only got another chance as sugar producer after Haïti withdrew from the world market at the beginning of the 19th century.

THE POLITICAL ORGANIZATION

The only thing Barlaeus writes about the political organization of Palmares is that they had copied their way of government from the Portuguese. In his book names of Maroon leaders are mentioned: Sebastião do Souto and Camarãs. Blaer speaks of a king and a hall of meetings, but does not tell us any more about the political structure. De Rocha Pita speaks about a republic with a chosen head of state, bearing the title of Zúmbi, assisted by magistrates in connection with justice and waging war. It is, however, not clear where he got his material from.

The *Relação* says about the leadership of the Maroons of Palmares that the king had palaces with servants and guards and houses for his family members. He was assisted by soldiers bearing African ranks. The king was treated with every possible respect. Whoever obtained an audience had to kneel on the ground and fold his arms as a sign of submission and proof of respect (*Relação* 1988: 29).

Pereira de Costa (1951: IV, 511) turns de Rocha Pita's republic into a monarquia eletiva. We do not know - still according to Pereira de Costa - whether the Maroons had a party system. The notices by De Rocha Pita are interpreted by Clovis Moura (1972: 180) as if there was a council under the king of Palmares, which consisted of the heads of the various *mucambos* who frequently met in order to discuss all relevant affairs.

The *Relação* contains a whole list of chieftain names: Zumbi, Amaro, Acotirene, Tabocas, Osenga, Kafuxe, Zumbi's brother and Aqualtune, the mother of the king. This account creates an image of a conglomeration of

villages, each with its own chieftain, under a central authority. However, it does not make clear how strong this central authority was.

In Suriname the village chieftains were called 'captains'. A similar terminology was also used in Brazil. Manoel Lopez, one of the leaders of the troops against Palmares, called Zumbi a 'capitão' (Altavilla 1926: 61), whereas Mario Mello (1935: 182), writing about the structure of power in Palmares, observes: 'Abaixo dos reis, estavam os Capitães' (Next to the kings, they had captains). In both countries this name had probably been taken over from the colonial form of government.

The political structure of the Suriname Maroons is based on (matrilin-ear) kinship. Each tribe (there are six) consists of a number of matriclans. The clans trace back to ancestors who ran away from a certain plantation or region. The matri-clans have their own land rights and villages. Sometimes segments of several clans are living together in one village, but they live in somewhat separate parts. Did Palmares have an authority which coordinated the villages? In Suriname this exists. The Suriname Maroon tribes know the institute of the granman, the paramount chief. According to the oral tradition the granman is supplied by the matriclan which has been living in the jungle the longest. On the political organization in Palmares the *Relação* mentions that everybody is subordinate to a king, named Gangazumba, which means 'senhor Grande'. This mention can mean nothing else than that Ganga-Zumba is not a proper name but a title. A title which deviates very little from the Suriname granman. In Suriname also the Dutch governor was called granman by slaves and Maroons. Nina Rodrigues (1932: 93) already indicated that *ganga* is a corruption of *ngana* and is derived from Kimbundo, in which language it means 'senhor/lord' as well as 'priest' (Rodrigues 1932: 93).

According to Schwartz the chief figure in the African ki-lombo was the *nganga a nzumbi*, a priest whose responsibility it was to deal with the spirits of the dead. The *ganga* Zumba of Palmares was probably the holder of this office (Schwartz 1992: 126-128).

In the period 1770-1795 Palmares knew two *ngangas*. The first one is called Gangazuma in the *Relação*, the second one is called Zumby in subsequent records. In both cases Zumba/i will not have been a proper name, but a title. The first Zumba/i is supposed to have been poisoned in 1678, after he had concluded peace with the Portuguese. The new Zumba/i was the person who got killed in 1796. He called the first Zumba/i uncle (*sobrinho*). It is remarkable that regularly mention is made of kinship between the leading Maroons. Sometimes the mother, the uncle, the nephew and the children of chieftains are mentioned. The succession of Zumba/i (I) by his nephew Zumba/i (II) would have been very acceptable in Suriname, as a chieftain is succeeded by one of his sister's sons in a matrilinear society.

As many have commented, the word *quilombo* originated in Angola. With the Imbangala, a people of warriors on the border between Angola and Kongo, usually called Jaga by the Portuguese, the ki-lombo was a male initiation society or circumcision camp where young men were prepared for adulthood and warrior status. The ki-lombo was a military society to which any man by training and initiation could belong. Designed for war, the ki-lombo created a powerful warrior cult by incorporating large numbers of strangers who lacked a common ancestry. It was a society structured by initiation rather than by kinship (Schwartz 1992: 126-127). Schwartz points out that the founders or the people who later became the leaders of Palmares, could have had an Angolan ki-lombo background. Of course not the entire ki-lombo concept would have been transferred to Brazil, but elements of it will certainly have been present in Palmares.

As regards the names of the villages, we can say that there are similarities between Suriname and Brazil. Some villages have a name of which it is not clear why the name was chosen, for instance: Subupira, Macaco, Mundao and Gongóro. Others were indicated by the description: 'village of ...' (Zumbi, Amaro, Acotirene, Tabocas, Osenga, Kafuxe and Aqualtune), whereas, according to Brandã (1935: 67), Dambrabanga is a corruption of Zala-Banga, which meant 'dwelling of the Banga-Maroons'. In Suriname the designation of villages can virtually always be explained. Misalasi (I will not leave), Alesikondre (rice village), Nomerimi (do not touch me), whereas also sometimes villages were named after their leader ('village of Kodjo, Koki, Puja'). Also in Suriname the name of the village sometimes referred to the ethnic mixture of inhabitants: Papakondre (village of Papa Negroes), Loangokondre (village of Loango Negroes), Creolendorp (Creole village, Creoles being slaves born in Suriname).

THE AGRICULTURAL SYSTEM

The villages of the Palmares Maroons were surrounded by provision-grounds and palm fields. The Maroons were familiar with the system of provision-grounds from the plantations, where the slaves grew their own crops. On the provision-grounds they cultivated beans, sweet potatoes, cassava, maize and sugarcane. Oddly enough no one mentions yams, a product which does very well in this region and which was a favourite food of the Suriname Maroons. The great importance the various palm trees had for the Maroons becomes clear from Blaer's journal.

Blaer's journal mentions that the troops could easily capture Palmares, because the Maroons were working on their provision-grounds, a situation we could also find in Suriname. There the Maroons often were away from their villages for weeks, as they stayed in separate huts near the provision-

grounds. Something similar was also the case in Palmares in 1645, as the journal reports that when the commando returned in April, it had burnt more than 60 huts that were standing in the provision-grounds.

The Maroons had plenty of fish from the rivers. They had large coops with chickens. They did not have any cattle, in order to eat meat they had to go hunting.²⁷ Also in Suriname the Maroons often had large quantities of chickens in their village. In 1768 a bush patrol in Suriname discovered a village consisting of 32 houses, with large chicken coops containing more than 700 chickens (Hoogbergen 1990: 58).

The main food was probably maize, which according to Barlaeus was planted and harvested twice a year. A few weeks before planting the forest was burnt down. After the harvest there were two weeks of celebrations. Today the first maize in Pernambuco is planted after 20 March at the start of the rainy season. At the end of June, when the first maize crop is harvested, there still is a period of big celebrations, especially around St. João (24 June). St. João is also a revered saint in Spain and Portugal. In average years - when it is not too dry - they plant twice a year also in these days.

According to Alves Filho (1988: 13-14) the land of the Palmares Maroons society was collective property, a statement he took over from Duvidiliano Ramos (1966: 98). There are no indications in that respect in the records. Ramos stated that the agricultural land belonged to the Maroon community as a whole, organized in villages and federations. The useful use of the land, the possession of the crops, belonged to the ones who worked the provision-grounds. For that matter Alves Filho remains very vague in his description of what 'propriedade coletiva' exactly means. Who formed in Maroon society the cooperative? The village, everybody, a group of relatives? Alves Filho states that collective ownership of the land is the best adaptation for a Maroon society and that individual ownership of land was also non-existent in pre-colonial Africa.

The last reason seems to me the strongest. In the agricultural organization, which is a subsistence economy, the Maroons fell back on the systems they had known in Africa, where rights to the use of land were owned by clans. The same solution was chosen by the Suriname Maroons. They also do not know any individual ownership of land. However, collective land does not mean collective production or collective right to the proceeds of this land. Each matrilinear group had (and still has) the right to use certain pieces of land. These rights are determined by history. The

²⁷The Hague, Algemeen Rijksarchief. Archief Oude West-Indische Compagniën, *Daily Minutes* of 2 February 1644 and *Letters Received from Brazil* of 5 April 1644: 'remarkable chicken coops, although they did not possess other animals in large numbers, the blacks lived in the same way as in Angola'.

Suriname Maroons went to an empty piece of land and the family which cultivated a certain piece of land automatically got the right to use that land. Every member of the clan may grow his crops on the land of the clan. The cycle of planting, caring and harvesting is carried out by the women, each woman has her own land. The male family members or the husbands assist in clearing the land: cutting the trees and burning the cut trees and branches during the dry season. No one is allowed to grow something on the land of another clan without special permission, let alone harvest. The means of production for agriculture: axes, cutters and machetes are private property, the same applies to boats that are used to go to and from the provision-grounds.

INDUSTRY

From a letter of 1 June 1671 written by governor Fernão de Sousa Coutinho, it becomes clear that the Maroons of Palmares had iron and tools at their disposal, with which they were able to make weapons. The *sertão* where they live – Sousa Coutinho wrote – contains iron and nitrate (*salitre*), so they have everything they need for their defence.²⁸ According to Alves Filho (1988: 14) the availability of iron ore meant that the Maroons knew some kind of work division. He distinguishes four groups: *camponeses* (farmers), *artesãos* (craftsmen), *guerreiros* (warriors) and *funcionários* (public servants). The craftsmen made sickles, hammers and machetes. They also made earthenware pots and wooden utensils. We also know – still according to Alves Filho – that they made domestic utensils. It remains unclear where exactly Alves Filho got his information from. It seems to me that a Maroon community was not stratified to such an extent that separate professional groups could come into being. Blaer's journal mentions that there were various craftsmen among the inhabitants of Palmares. About the Suriname Maroons is known that there were blacksmiths among them. These people could repair iron objects. However being a craftsman or a blacksmith does not say, being a specialized person with no other things to do.

RELIGION

Palmares must have had small churches. It remains unclear whether the various villages each had its own little church or chapel. In view of the deeply religious disposition of Maroons in general, this will certainly have been the case. To what extent those churches were Catholic, syncretistic

²⁸Arquivo Histórico Ultramarino in Lisbon, Records of Pernambuco, caixa 5, papéis avulsos. The text can be found in Ennes (1938: 24-6).

or houses for African gods remains in the dark. In 1645 Blaer's journal mentioned that the village he had captured had a church. The note that the religion of the Maroons of Palmares was an imitation of that of the Portuguese comes from Barlaeus. In itself this is not surprising. Slaves who were shipped from Portuguese-African ports got baptized before they embarked. Besides they were branded with a cross, not only as a sign that they had been baptized, but also to indicate that tax had been paid to the Crown. In Brazil the slaves arrived in extremely Catholic surroundings. The literature contains numerous references to a kind of syncretism of Catholicism and African popular beliefs and customs developing among the slaves. It is not surprising that the slaves who fled the plantations took that syncretistic belief with them. For the Calvinist Dutchmen with their believing in sermons and hymns, averse from hagiolatry, processions, promises, candles and incense, it was difficult to assess the religion of the Maroons at its true value.

For De Rocha Pita the Maroons of Palmares were 'cristãos cismáticos'. The only thing they supposedly had taken over from the Catholics was the cross, as well as some prayers which they had been completely transformed. He called them 'cismáticos' because they could not receive sacraments and had no (Catholic) priest in their midst. Costa (1951: IV, 230 and 510) quotes 'um notável escritor' (but I have not been able to find out who), who informed us that the Maroons had Christianity, copied from the Jesuits. Edison Carneiro (1947: 42-43) is also of the opinion that the religion of the Maroons of Palmares was similar to Catholicism.

Macaco had a little chapel with three statues, one very beautiful 'O Meninho-Jesus' (the Infant Jesus), one of 'Nossa Senhora da Conceição' and one of 'São Bras'.

CONTACT WITH OTHER GROUPS OF POPULATION

The *Relação* elaborates on the contacts that existed between Maroons and other inhabitants of the colony. An extensive trade developed with the inhabitants of coastal villages. The inhabitants derived all kinds of advantages from those contacts. By being friendly with the Maroons they avoided their goods being stolen. Crops, fish and poultry were traded for weapons, gun powder, bullets, fruit wines, clothing and aguardente. The Maroons regularly paid with gold, silver and money, the origin of which was very obscure. The slaves of those inhabitants were also busy in the trade, hid them and warned against possible dangers. The relation between the inhabitants of those villages and the Maroons was so good, that when slaves of those inhabitants fled to them, they were returned immediately (Costa 1951: IV, 512-3).

Loreto Coutho (1904: 189) writes that some inhabitants had concluded a *trato oculto* with the Maroons. This description strongly resembles the *sweri* (bloodoath) ritual of the Suriname Maroons. Groups of Maroons roaming the forest, were always fearful of attacks by other groups of Maroons or Indians. If a group discovered another group in the neighbourhood, with which it wanted to live in peace, an alliance was formed in a ritual way. Often earth was mixed with a drink, to which blood of the persons concluding the pact was added. Little sips were taken from this drink (the *sweri* or *sweli*) and the basic thought behind it was that the *sweri* god would see to it that the pact (peace) was not broken.²⁹

LANGUAGE AND ETHNIC BACKGROUND

Little is known about the ethnic background of the Maroons of Palmares and the language they spoke. De Rocha Pita states that Palmares' form of government had been copied from Angola. Various people (such as Rodrigues and Schwartz) have pointed out the Bantu origin of the term *nganga*. The *Relação* says about Zumbi's mother in law that she came from Angola. In the same *Relação* the seized Ganga-muisa is called the leader of the *gente de Angola* (the people from Angola). In itself the Bantu influences are not surprising, as the majority of the slaves imported through Recife in that period had a Bantu background.

A large number of Maroons must have been born in Brazil, probably even in freedom in Palmares, because of the large number of Maroons who were related to each other. In addition, in 1678 freedom was requested for all those who had been born in Palmares, to distinguish them from slaves who had come to the Maroons after that time.

In Suriname the Maroons who had first worked a number of years on the plantations, spoke the same language as the slaves: Sranan Tongo, an English-based Creole language. However, there were also slaves who fled to the Maroons virtually immediately after their arrival in the colony. These people did not know the slave language, and often they continued to speak African until they died. A number of those languages still remain as religious, sacral languages. From the moment the Maroons started to

²⁹The *sweri* had deadly powers. *Sweri* was drunk when the Aukaners in 1760 concluded a peace treaty with the Suriname government. Granman Kofi Bosuman of the Saramaka Maroons drank *sweri* with the Maroons of Pasop, on which occasion he offered that group protection and declared to never hand them over. Later he would declare to the post holder that he could not hand over Pasop to him because of the deadly effect of that *sweri* (see Hoeree & Hoogbergen 1984). Also the Aukaner and Boni Maroons drank *sweri* together various times. See Hoogbergen 1990 (chapter 5).

form a cultural unit, their language started to deviate from the slave language, although the groups could understand each other.

There are no indications that the situation in Brazil was essentially different. In so far as the Maroons lived on plantations for a number of years they will have spoken *o dialeto da senzala*, a creole language based on Portuguese. Others will have continued to speak their African language. Considering the frequent contacts with Indians, Indian influence must also have been considerable. Freitas (1982) quotes a statement made by governor Francisco de Brito Freyre, which confirms this hypothesis: 'They speak a language which sometimes resembles the language of Guinee or Angola, sometimes Portuguese or the language of the Tupi Indians, but they do not speak their own, new language.'³⁰ Anyway, Maroons and governor used interpreters during the peace negotiations of 1678, which makes it clear that the dialect of the Maroons differed considerably from Portuguese.

IDEOLOGY

In this article I have tried to explain from which sources the story about Palmares has been put together. The main conclusion is that there are few reliable sources that tell something about the life of the Maroons and the internal structure of their society. Therefore a lot of what is said about that is speculation. The main source for the political organization of Palmares turns out to be De Rocha Pita. At points where this author could be verified due to other information which emerged from records (Zumbi's death and the role Domingos Jorge Velho played at the seizure of Zumbi's fortification), he turned out to be not very reliable.

For Black Brazilians, Palmares is more than just another historic event. This episode in history takes up a place in the emancipation ideology of the Brazilian black movement. For more than ten years now annual commemorations have been organized near the place where Zumbi threw himself off the rocks. The first black archbishop in Brazil was called Dom Zumbi.

The story about the alternative black community in the Brazilian jungle therefore means different things to the various discourses. In school-books, read the mentioned ones of Osvaldo R. de Souza and Paulo Alcantara, it is important to emphasize that slaves did not remain helplessly on the plantations, but instead built up alternative communities. This is why those books for the youth say that Maroons of Palmares had cattle and

³⁰ "Falavam uma língua toda sua, às vezes parecendo da Guiné ou de Angola, outras vezes parecendo o português e tupi, mas não é nenhuma dessas e sim outra língua nova".

workshops, where clothes (etc.) were made. It stresses the independence of runaway blacks from colonial society.

For the rational historian it might be important to accentuate that we know so little about the internal structure of Palmares, that we better not talk about it, for the emancipatory discourse the position is the reverse.

Because we know so little about it, we can fill in the alternative according to our own ideals. For the emancipatory discourse it remains important that Zumbi preferred death to surrender. Therefore it is only logical that both versions of the history are told in the history books of Souto Maior. That history is science, is an academic opinion, that history is myth, seems to me a more useful option from a social point of view.

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